



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029**

Mr. Christopher Bias
228 Sharples Drive
Sharples, West Virginia 25183

Dear Mr. Bias:

Thank you for your electronic correspondence of January 19, 2014 to President Barack Obama, which was received by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), regarding your concerns about the Elk River chemical spill in West Virginia which occurred in January. EPA shares your concern about the chemical spill and the quality of the drinking water. I would like to take this opportunity to provide information on EPA's role in responding to this spill and the related drinking water concerns.

EPA has been monitoring the incident and has been in close communication with the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection and the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (WVDHHR), who responded promptly to this spill. They have taken steps to remedy the release and restore the drinking water for the people of the Charleston area. The Federal government, including EPA, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, mobilized resources to support the state agencies through every step of this emergency. An EPA emergency responder was present at Freedom Industries from the beginning of the incident through mid-March, and EPA drinking water personnel continue to be in contact with WVDHHR and the West Virginia American Water Company to provide assistance and advice.

The chemicals involved in the January Elk River spill, 4-Methylcyclohexanemethanol (MCHM), propylene glycol phenyl ether (PPH) and dipropylene glycol phenyl ether (DiPPH), are not currently regulated by EPA under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), few studies exist on the specialized chemical MCHM, and toxicologic information on PPH and DiPPH is limited. However, CDC has developed protective levels for purposes of responding to this emergency. Additional information on MCHM, PPH, and DiPPH, and an explanation of how the protective levels were calculated are available at CDC's website:
<http://emergency.cdc.gov/chemical/MCHM/westvirginia2014/index.asp>.

At the direction of Governor Earl Ray Tomblin, a program for tap water testing in homes is underway. Information on this effort can be found at <http://www.dhsem.wv.gov/Pages/WV-American-Water-Emergency.aspx> (Click on West Virginia Testing Assessment Project (WVTAP).) The state government has the lead for this effort and EPA will provide technical support as requested. EPA will remain in close coordination with state agencies as the study

progresses.

West Virginia American Water Company is providing the most current information on this situation to its Kanawha Valley Customers on its website:

<http://www.amwater.com/wvaw/about-us/news.html>.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. William Arguto, Chief of EPA's Drinking Water Branch, at 215-814-3367.

Sincerely,

Jon M. Capacasa, Director
Water Protection Division

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Sincerely,

Jon M. Capacasa, Director
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CONCURRENCES

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DATE	*							

